

WHAT'S *New*

in the Metropolitan Police Department



*A weekly update for residents, visitors,
and workers in the District of Columbia*

Friday, October 15, 2004

MAYOR ANNOUNCES 9-1-1 SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS, AS NEW OFFICE OF UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS STARTS WORK

Mayor Williams this week cited statistics showing dramatic improvements in the District's 9-1-1 and 3-1-1 operations, as he formally announced the creation of a new agency to manage emergency and non-emergency communications in DC. Effective October 1, all of DC's 9-1-1 emergency and 3-1-1 non-emergency operations have been consolidated under a new Office of Unified Communications (OUC). The Citywide Call Center (727-1000) is being transitioned to the new agency as well. In the past, 9-1-1 and 3-1-1 call-taking and dispatching were handled by the MPDC and the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department. Civilian personnel in the two agencies have been transferred to the new OUC, which is headed by Michael Latessa. The move is designed to better coordinate and streamline emergency and non-emergency communications in DC. While the new agency continues to work out of the Public Safety Communications Center on McMillan Drive, NW, by the end of 2005, emergency and non-emergency communications will move to the new Unified Communications Center under construction on the St. Elizabeth east campus in Ward 8. At his weekly press briefing, the Mayor noted that even before the creation of the OUC, 9-1-1 and 3-1-1 performance had improved dramatically. In September, for example, 94 percent of 9-1-1 calls were answered within 5 seconds, compared with only about two-thirds of the calls a year earlier. The percentage of 3-1-1 calls answered within 11 seconds has also risen sharply, from about 74 percent a year ago to 90 percent last month. The percentage of calls abandoned by the caller—in many cases, hang-ups from people who feel frustrated over having to wait for an answer—has also declined. A year ago, more than 10 percent of the 9-1-1 calls were abandoned; in September, the figure was about 3 percent.

① In thanking the PSCC employees and the MPDC and Fire/EMS communications leadership, the Mayor said the improvements are the result of new technology, the hiring of more personnel and enhanced employee performance.

① To learn more about the 9-1-1 and 3-1-1 systems in DC, go to:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/phone/phone.shtm>

① For information on the Public Safety Communications Center, visit:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/phone/pssc.shtm>

TWO MPDC MEMBERS REMEMBERED DURING WREATHLAYING CEREMONY AT LAW ENFORCEMENT MEMORIAL

Two MPDC members who died in the line of duty in 2004 were among 11 DC-area law enforcement officers recently honored during the 13th Annual Wreathlaying Ceremony at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Judiciary Square. Sergeant John Ashley, who died on May 30, and Sergeant Clifton Rife II, who was shot and killed on June 2, were remembered during the ceremony, which is held on October 15th of each year to commemorate the dedication of the memorial in 1991. In his keynote remarks at the ceremony, Chief Ramsey called Ashley, Rife and the nine other fallen officers "heroes" and "outstanding public servants, in the great tradition of Thomas Jefferson." Added the Chief, "Throughout history, our country has been blessed with special and visionary leaders.... But let us never forget that supporting and defending that grand vision of freedom and equality have been literally thousands and thousands and thousands of police officers over the years—men and women who had the courage and the conviction to stare down danger, and to go to work every day to make our communities a little bit safer and our democracy a whole lot stronger."

① Read the Chief's complete statement at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/stmts/2004/10/101504.shtm>

① Sergeants Rife and Ashley are also remembered on the MPDC's online memorial to officers killed in the line of duty. Access the online memorial—and add a personal remembrance—at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/about/heroes/officers/officers.shtm>

STUDENT PLEDGE AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE IS OCTOBER 20

As DC continues to combat the problem of juvenile homicide and violence, the MPDC and the DC Public Schools are expected to participate in this year's Student Pledge Against Gun Violence. The Student Pledge, which takes place on Wednesday, October 20, is a "day of national concern about young people and gun violence." On that day, students in middle through senior high schools throughout the country are encouraged to sign a voluntary, three-part promise that they will 1) never carry a gun to school, 2) never resolve a dispute with a gun and 3) use their influence with their friends to keep them from resolving disputes with guns. The Pledge encourages young people to take a proactive stance in reducing gun violence. In DC, the Police Department's School Resource Officers (SROs) will be working with DCPS officials to encourage students to sign the Pledge on October 20. As part of a citywide school safety initiative, the MPDC this year increased the number of SROs in the schools from 72 to 99 and the number of supervisors from 5 to 14. This year's Student Pledge Against Gun Violence comes as the number of juvenile homicide victims in DC has increased, even as overall homicides have declined. Twenty-two juveniles have been murdered so far this year in DC—17 of them were the victims of gunshots.

SEPTEMBER DATA SHOW CONTINUED REDUCTIONS IN AGGRESSIVE DRIVING IN DC

September data from both of the MPDC's photo enforcement programs show continued progress in bringing down the incidence of red-light running and aggressive speeding on DC roadways. The Department's 39 red-light intersection safety cameras recorded fewer than 11,000 potential violations last month. That compares with nearly 38,000 violations recorded during the first full month that the cameras were in place. In other words, DC is now recording 27,000 fewer dangerous (and potentially deadly) red-light violations each month at the intersections with cameras, or a decline of almost 72 percent. In the area of speeding, the aggressive speeding rate in DC continues to decline in those enforcement zones covered by the MPDC's photo radar speeding reduction program. In September, for the second consecutive month, just over 4 percent of all vehicles monitored by photo radar were found to be traveling above the threshold speed established for the program—the lowest rate of aggressive speeding since the automated traffic safety program began. That compares with an aggressive speeding rate of 31 percent in July 2001 (initial warning period) and 25.5 percent in August 2001 (first month of ticketing). Average speeds on all DC roadways—residential streets, arteries and highways—are substantially lower today than they were when the program began three years ago. On streets with a 25-mph speed limit, the average speed of all vehicles monitored by photo radar was just 26.8 mph in September—down from 35.5 mph in July 2001.

NEWS & NOTES

"Chatting with the Chief" on WHUR Radio. Chief Ramsey discusses public safety issues and takes phone calls from 6:40-7 pm, on Tuesday, October 19, during his monthly "Chatting with the Chief" program on WHUR 96.3-FM. Details at <http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/media/media.shtm>.

Public Space Permits Now Online. The District Department of Transportation's Public Space Permit application forms and one-page instructions are now available online. The permits are required for such uses as banners, residential driveway and curb cuts, fences and retaining walls. Details and forms at http://ddot.dc.gov/ddot/cwp/view,a,1252,q,619328,ddotNav_GID,1610.asp

Emergency Preparedness Hearing. The MPDC will participate in a public oversight hearing on emergency preparedness in DC, called by the DC Council's Committee on the Judiciary, on Monday, October 25. View the Council's complete calendar at <http://www.dccouncil.washington.dc.us/calendar.html>.

- ① For more on the Student Pledge, go to:
<http://www.pledge.org>
- ① Additional school safety resources can be found at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/family/schoolsafetylinks.shtm>
- ① The latest juvenile homicide victim—15-year-old Shawn Riley of Southeast—was found shot to death on October 11 in the rear of 712 Brandywine Street, SE. Read the news release at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/news.asp?sid=2920>

- ① Details on the MPDC's red-light camera intersection safety program are at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/redlight.shtm>
- ① Details on the photo radar speeding reduction initiative can be found at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/speed.shtm>
- ① While some surrounding jurisdictions are experiencing an increase in traffic fatalities, in DC the number is down 30 percent this year. Get an up-to-date traffic fatality count at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/trstats.shtm>

DATA BOX

Homicides as of 10/15/04

- ◆ 2004: 156
- ◆ 2003: 196
- ◆ % Change: -20.4%
- ◆ Closure Rate: 55.8% (87 closures)

Adult Arrests week end. 10/9/04

- ◆ Total: 816
- ◆ Drugs: 136
- ◆ Weapons: 23
- ◆ Motor Vehicle Theft: 12
- ◆ Prostitution/Sex Offenses: 36

Juvenile Activity

- ◆ Arrests: 67 week end. 10/9/04
- ◆ Curfew Violations: 20 week end. 10/12/04
- ◆ Truants: 154 week end. 10/12/04

Firearm Recoveries as of 10/13/04

- ◆ October: 41
- ◆ 2004 Total: 1,566

Traffic Fatalities as of 10/15/04

- ◆ 2004: 38
- ◆ 2003: 55
- ◆ % Change: -30.9%

Information, ideas, or comments about this service? Send an e-mail to **KEVIN MORISON**, MPDC's Director of Corporate Communications, at kevin.morison@dc.gov. Would you like to have this information e-mailed to you? Just go to our Website and register with **Crimereports.com**.

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